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Saluting Employees

TDCJ employee retires from Air Force Reserve after 30 years service

In April, a retirement ceremony was held for Emil Garza at Lackland Air Force base in San Antonio. Garza served more than 30 years in active duty and reserve positions, ultimately attaining the rank of Command Chief Master Sergeant. In his civilian life, Garza is employed as assistant regional director of Region IV for the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) Correctional Institutions Division (CID), and has been with the agency since 1994.

Garza began his military career in 1978 as a Security Forces Airman. He served active-duty from 1978 to 1982, and joined the Air Force Reserve's 433rd Weapons Systems Security Flight, 433rd Military Airlift Wing in 1988 after a short break from military service. He served in many supervisory roles throughout his military career and was mobilized three times, including a tour of duty

to Saudi Arabia in 2002. Garza's service was recognized during his time in the military, and he received several military decorations, including the Air Force Meritorious Service Medal and the Air Force Commendation Medal.



Emil Garza (right) receives a Certificate of Retirement from Brigadier General Kenneth Lewis during an Air Force retirement ceremony held in April at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio. (Photo courtesy of Lackland Talespinner)

In 1994, Garza began his career with TDCJ as a correctional officer at the McConnell Unit in Beeville. He has held several positions during his time with the agency, including chief administrator of the Security Threat Group Management Office. In 2013, he was named assistant regional director for CID Region IV.

Like many other TDCJ employees who have served in the armed forces, Garza's military experience has been an asset to his criminal justice career. He appreciates the opportunities that these two careers have provided, and commented on how his military service compliments his agency career, saying, "TDCJ and the military have given me the best of both worlds. I have been blessed to have had the opportunity to serve the State of Texas and this great nation. The professional, as well as the personal experiences in one job have benefited me in the other." ●